



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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June 20, 2011

TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM:

Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN, INC. FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY – A
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTRACT
SERVICES PROVIDER – CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

We have completed a review of Families for Children, Inc. Foster Family Agency (Families for Children or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contract service provider. The purpose of our review was to determine whether Families for Children was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and their County contract.

DCFS contracts with Families for Children, a private, non-profit, community-based organization, to recruit, train and certify foster parents to supervise children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child in a foster home, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from foster care. Families for Children oversees 19 certified foster homes in which 39 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. The Agency is located in the Second Supervisorial District. DCFS paid Families for Children approximately \$730,000 and \$834,000 during Fiscal Years 2008-09 and 2009-10, respectively.

Results of Review

The foster children we interviewed indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents, and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from Families for Children met their expectations. The Agency also ensured that their staff had the required education and work experience, conducted required hiring clearances, and

provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract. However, we noted that Families for Children did not always comply with all of the requirements of California Department of Social Services' Title 22 regulations and their County contract. For example:

- One (33%) of the three foster homes reviewed in 2009 did not adequately secure cleaning supplies.

During our 2010 follow-up, we noted that this foster home no longer had foster children. The two other foster homes we visited adequately secured items that could pose a safety hazard to children.

Families for Children's attached response indicates that they increased their home visits to consistently monitor for compliance.

- Two (33%) of the six Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed in 2009 did not have time-limited goals, and one NSP (17%) did not have specific goals for the child. We noted a similar issue in our September 30, 2008 report on Families for Children.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three additional NSPs reviewed had time-limited, specific goals for the child.

Families for Children's attached response indicates that they are providing additional training to their staff to ensure compliance.

- Three (50%) of the six NSPs reviewed in 2009 did not include the reason the children were in placement.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three additional NSPs reviewed included the reason the children were in placement.

Families for Children's attached response indicates that they will train their staff and monitor to ensure compliance.

- One (17%) of the six case files reviewed in 2009 did not have required documentation that Families for Children's social workers visited the children weekly during the first three months of placement as required.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three additional case files reviewed had documentation of weekly visits.

Families for Children's attached response indicates that they will train their social workers to ensure weekly visits are documented.

- One of the three (33%) children reviewed in 2009 who were taking psychotropic medications did not have a current court authorization for the medication. However, the foster parent and foster child indicated the child was taking the medication, and

was seen monthly by the prescribing physician. After our review, the Agency provided a current court authorization for the medication.

During our 2010 follow-up, we confirmed that the one child who was taking psychotropic medications at the time of our follow-up had a current court authorization.

Families for Children's attached response indicates that they will continue to attempt to obtain the authorizations well in advance and document their efforts.

- The Agency had a contract social worker who did not sign the required declaration stating that their combined caseload at all agencies would not exceed 15 children.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three part-time and contracted social workers had signed declarations on file.

Families for Children's attached response indicates that they will ensure contract social workers sign a declaration.

Details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

To enable Families for Children to begin taking action immediately, we discussed our findings and recommendations with Agency management while completing our reviews.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with Families for Children on January 24, 2011, and with DCFS. Families for Children management's response (Attachment I) indicates the actions the Agency has taken to address the issues noted in our report. DCFS' response (Attachment II) indicates they will monitor the Agency for compliance with our recommendations.

We thank Families for Children management for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:JLS:DC:AA
Attachments

- c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., Interim Director, DCFS
Warren Magness, Board of Directors Chair, Families for Children
Andrew Henderson, Executive Director, Families for Children
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing, CDSS
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN, INC FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW
FISCAL YEARS 2008-09 AND 2009-10**

BACKGROUND

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) pays Families for Children, Inc. Foster Family Agency (Families for Children or Agency) a monthly rate per child placement. The rate is established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Families for Children receives between \$1,430 and \$1,679 per child per month, based on the child's age, for a total of approximately \$730,000 and \$834,000 during Fiscal Years (FY) 2008-09 and 2009-10, respectively.

PURPOSE/METHODOLOGY

The purpose of our review was to determine whether Families for Children was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and their County contract. We reviewed the Agency's certified foster parent files, children's case files and personnel files, and interviewed Agency staff. We also visited three certified foster homes, and interviewed four foster parents and four foster children. We completed our review in June 2009, and conducted a follow-up review in September 2010. To enable Families for Children to begin taking action immediately, we discussed our findings and recommendations with Agency management while completing our reviews.

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Families for Children provided program services in accordance with CDSS Title 22 regulations and their County contract.

Verification

As noted earlier, we visited three of the Agency's 19 certified foster homes in Los Angeles County, and interviewed four foster parents and four children placed in the three homes. We also observed two toddlers who were too young to interview. In addition, we reviewed the case files for five foster parents and six children, and reviewed the Agency's monitoring activities.

Results

Families for Children did not always adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they complied with CDSS Title 22 regulations and their County contract. Specifically:

Foster Home Visitation and Needs and Services Plans

- One (33%) of the three foster homes reviewed in 2009 did not adequately secure cleaning supplies.

During our 2010 follow-up, the foster home no longer had foster children, and we confirmed that the other two foster homes from our 2009 review were still properly securing items that could pose a safety hazard to children.

- One (17%) of the six Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed in 2009 was completed two months late.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three additional NSPs reviewed were completed timely.

- Two (33%) of the six NSPs reviewed in 2009 did not have time-limited goals, and one NSP did not have specific goals for the child. We noted a similar issue in our September 30, 2008 report on Families for Children.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three additional NSPs reviewed had time-limited and specific goals for the child.

- Three (50%) of the six NSPs reviewed in 2009 did not include the reason the children were in placement.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three additional NSPs reviewed included the reason the children were in placement.

Children's Case Files and Termination Reports

- One (17%) of the six case files reviewed in 2009 did not have documentation that Families for Children's social workers visited the children weekly during the first three months of placement as required.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three additional case files reviewed had documentation of weekly visits.

- Both (100%) of the two Termination Reports reviewed in 2009 did not indicate the date they were sent to the DCFS social workers. As a result, the Agency did not document that they sent the Termination Reports to the DCFS social workers timely.

During our 2010 follow-up, six (46%) of the 13 Termination Reports reviewed were sent to the DCFS social worker an average of 29 days late.

Medical Services

- One of the three (33%) children reviewed in 2009 who were taking psychotropic medications did not have a current court authorization for the medication on file. However, the foster parent and foster child indicated the child was taking the medication, and was seen monthly by the prescribing physician. After our review, the Agency provided a current court authorization for the medication.

During our 2010 follow-up, we noted that the one child who was taking psychotropic medications at that time had a current court authorization on file.

Recommendations

Families for Children management ensure:

1. Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.
2. Foster parents adequately secure cleaning supplies and other items that could pose a safety hazard to children.
3. NSPs are prepared timely, include goals that are time limited and specific to the child, and indicate the reason the child is in placement.
4. Children are visited weekly during their first three months of placement.
5. Termination Reports are sent to the DCFS social worker timely.
6. Children taking psychotropic medications have a current court authorization for the medication.

CLIENT VERIFICATION**Objective**

Determine whether the foster parents and children received the services that Families for Children billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed four foster parents and four children placed in three Families for Children certified foster homes to confirm they received the services billed to DCFS. We also observed two toddlers too young to interview.

Results

The foster children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations. In addition, the toddlers we observed seemed well cared for and healthy.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS**Objective**

Verify that Families for Children social workers' caseloads did not exceed 15 placements, and that the supervising social worker did not supervise more than six social workers as required by CDSS Title 22 regulations and the County contract.

Verification

We interviewed Families for Children's administrator, and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

Families for Children's five social workers carried an average eight cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised the five social workers. However, in 2009, we noted that Families for Children had a contract social worker who did not sign a required declaration stating that her combined caseload at all agencies would not exceed 15 children.

During our 2010 follow-up, all three contracted social workers had signed declarations on file.

Recommendation

7. Families for Children management ensure that contract social workers sign declarations stating that their combined caseload at all agencies will not exceed 15 children.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether Families for Children staff have the education and work experience required by CDSS Title 22 regulations and the County contract. In addition, determine

whether the Agency conducted required clearances before hiring their staff, and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

We interviewed Families for Children's administrator, and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

Families for Children's staff had the required education and work experience, and the Agency conducted hiring clearances, and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

Recommendation

None.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP**Objective**

Determine the status of the recommendations from the 2008 Auditor-Controller monitoring review.

Verification

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from our FY 2007-08 monitoring review had been implemented. The report was issued on September 30, 2008.

Results

Our September 30, 2008 monitoring report had nine recommendations. The Agency has fully implemented seven recommendations, and partially implemented one recommendation. However, one of the issues noted in our current review related to NSP goals was also noted in our 2008 report.

Recommendation

8. Families for Children management implement the outstanding recommendation from the 2008 monitoring report.

Families For Children Inc.

2500 W. Manchester Blvd. Inglewood, CA 90305 / (323) 755-5855

January 24, 2011

TO: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Andrew Henderson, MS
Executive Director

Subject: Families For Children Foster Family Agency Contract Review- A Department of Children and Family Services Provider

The auditor controller staff that conducted this contract review was both professional and appropriate. The results of this county contract review states: *The foster parents indicated that the services they received from the agency generally met their expectations and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. The toddlers we observed seemed well cared for and happy.* Families For Children intends to continue to provide the quality care we have been recognized for and will implement all recommendations stated in this report. In addition to specific actions related to the auditor controller report, Families For Children intends to immediately increase the quality assurance presence in all homes, including additional announced and unannounced visits to all of our homes.

Families For Children will insure that all previous auditor controller recommendations are promptly instituted and monitored.

1. County Recommendation

Staff adequately monitors foster homes to insure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Agency Corrective Action Plan

Families For Children provides continuous monthly training in the area of Title 22 regulations for small family homes. We have increased our Quality Assurance in this area to include more frequent home visits that specifically focus on Title 22 regulation compliance.

2. County Recommendation

Foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions, knives, alcoholic beverages, tools, and other items that could pose a potential safety hazard to children.

Agency Corrective Action Plan

As part of our increased Quality Assurance efforts we will specifically focus on this recommendation. We have increased our home visits to insure that we have consistent monitoring in this area.

Families For Children Inc.

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3. County Recommendation

Needs and Services Plans are prepared within required timeframes

Agency Corrective Action Plan

One of the six initial NSP was not prepared within the required timeframes. Families for Children have implemented a daily checklist to track timely submissions of required reports. In addition, the agency will mandate a meeting to retrain all agency social workers in content, due dates and goals.

4. County Recommendation

Needs and Services Plans contain all required information including goals that are time limited, measurable, and meet the identified needs of the children

Agency Corrective Action Plan

Families For Children is currently providing additional training to all of our social work staff that includes samples of what a quality operational goals plan should look like (measurable, long & short-term) as required by the County, and one-on-one supervisory review and revision of goals as needed. In addition we plan to share the findings of this auditor controller report with the social work staff so they understand the importance of compliance in this area.

5. County Recommendation

Needs and Services Plans indicate the reason the children are in placement.

Agency Corrective Action Plan

Families For Children will insure through training and monitoring that all Needs and Services Plans document and identify the initial reason children are in placement.

6. County Recommendation

One of the six case NSPs reviewed did not contain documentation that the children were visited weekly during the first three months.

Agency Corrective Action Plan

The required written weekly home visit reports were in the child's file but dates were not listed on the NSP in the appropriate area. Re-training of agency social workers per corrective action item # 4 above will ensure that all visit dates are documented in the NSPs. The agency will ensure through re-training that all children are visited every 7 days during the first three months of placement.

7. County Recommendation

Termination Reports are dated and prepared within required timeframes.

Agency Corrective Action Plan

Families For Children will insure through training and supervisory review that all termination reports are dated and prepared within required timeframes

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8: County Recommendation

Children taking psychotropic medications have a current court authorization for the administration of the medication.

Agency Corrective Action Plan

One of three children taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization for the administration of medication. It has been Families For Children policy for social workers to request updated psychotropic medication authorizations through physicians and psychiatrists approximately 45 days prior to the expiration of authorizations. Documented efforts by the agency to obtain the updated authorization were in the file for the 45 day period in addition to efforts and assistance from the County social worker to obtain the authorization timely.

Families For Children will continue to insure, with the assistance of the county and medical staff, that all children have a current authorization for administration of medications. This task will be completed by phone follow-up. Should Families For Children be unable to secure copies of authorization, we will document all efforts and seek guidance from the county.

9: County Recommendation

Families For Children management ensure that all part-time contracted social workers sign written declarations indicating that their combined caseload at all agencies worked will not exceed 15 placed children.

Families For Children has and will continue to insure that all part-time contracted social workers sign written declarations indicating that their combined caseload at all agencies worked will not exceed 15 placed children. Families For Children has a policy for several years that requires that all of our part-time contract workers sign the aforementioned declaration.

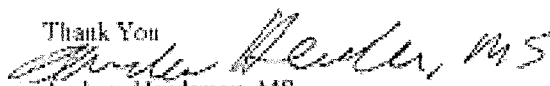
Prior Audit Findings

Please see our response to items 1, 2 and 4 for our plans to address the outstanding recommendations from fiscal year 2007/2008.

As identified by the most recently completed auditor-controller report we are in compliance with all past and current recommendations except one. We were late in sending Termination Reports to county social workers. This item has been corrected.

Families For Children will ensure future compliance through ongoing staff training, foster home monitoring and internal auditing procedures.

Thank You



Andrew Henderson, MS
Executive Director
(323) 750-5855 Ext 101

cc. Board of Directors, Chairman



PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

July 6, 2010

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM: 
Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head
Out of Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

Board of Supervisors
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Fifth District

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF
FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's Contract Review of Families for Children Foster Family Agency was conducted in May/June 2009. The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the Auditor-Controller's March 30, 2010 final draft report of the contract compliance review on April 2, 2010. The DCFS monitor reviewed the report on April 5, 2010, and noted a few discrepancies. The A-C report, the A-C exit document and the FFA's approved CAP were not consistent. The monitor requested and received the revised draft report on June 28, 2010.

The A-C review found no egregious findings which rose to the level of a referral to the Child Protection Hotline. The report, however, noted that one home did not adequately secure cleaning solutions and detergents. The FFA Executive Director, Mr. Andrew Henderson, on April 5, 2010, informed the monitor that they verified that the cleaning solutions and detergents of the home in question were locked, and provided a confirmation picture the following day. The A-C report noted that one child taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization. According to the A-C exit document, the request for the court authorization was on file. Subsequent to A-C review, the FFA provided the court authorization.

The A-C report also noted that they verified with the foster parent, the child and reviewed documents in the file that the child was taking the medication as prescribed and that the child was being seen monthly by the prescribing physician. According to the A-C report, one of the FFA part-time social worker did not sign a written declaration indicating that the social worker's combined caseload at all agencies will not exceed 15 placed children. However, the A-C exit document noted it as a missing documentation and that the FFA provided A-C the signed declaration prior to the end of A-C review. Therefore, this matter was corrected prior to the completion of the A-C audit.

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**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF
FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
PAGE 2**

Additionally, the A-C report noted that one of the six case files reviewed did not document one weekly visit, and several NSP/Quarterly Reports and termination reports were found deficient. On June 10, 2010, the FFA Administrator, Dr. Terilyn Henderson provided the OHCMD monitor with documentation verifying the monthly training she conducted with the FFA staff to address the A-C recommendations for required visits, NSPs, and termination reports. Further, the OHCMD provided NSP/Quarterly training to all providers on January 12, 2010.

The Auditor Controller approved Families for Children FFA's Corrective Action Plan submitted to A-C on March 24, 2010 and the revised CAP, which was received by OHCMD on June 28, 2010. The FFA's CAP addresses the implementation of increased home visits (announced and unannounced), a daily checklist to track timely reports, additional training, re-training, monitoring and supervisory review to ensure the quality management and care.

The Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) will conduct a follow-up review to ensure full and ongoing compliance with Title 22 regulations and County contract requirement based on the A-C's recommendations tentatively by October, 2010.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

MG:EAH:CR:ek

c: Brian Mahan, CEO, Children & Families Well-Being Cluster
Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Patricia Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Lisa Parrish, Deputy Director, DCFS



ANTONIA JIMÉNEZ
Acting Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, CA 90020

April 4, 2011

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

Board of Supervisors
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Second District
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Third District
DON KNABE
Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

FROM: 
Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head
Out-of-Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF
FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's (A-C) Contract Review of Families For Children Foster Family Agency was conducted in May/June 2009. The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the A-C's March 30, 2010 draft report on April 2, 2010 and a revised draft report on June 28, 2010. The OHCMD responded to the A-C's revised report on July 6, 2010 (Attachment II).

On February 1, 2011, the A-C submitted a final draft report which included a follow-up to their initial May/June 2009 review. The follow-up review was conducted in September 2010 to determine the status of their prior findings. The A-C's follow-up review reflects they verified that seven of eight recommendations were fully implemented. There was one outstanding recommendation regarding timely submission of Termination Reports to DCFS social workers. Families For Children submitted a Corrective Action Plan, dated January 24, 2011 addressing each of the A-C's recommendations.

The OHCMD will follow up on the A-C's recommendations to assess for full implementation during our next monitoring review.

KR:EAH

- c: David Seidenfeld, CEO, Children and Families Well-Being Cluster
Wendy Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Antonia Jimenez, Director, DCFS
Rhelda Shabazz, Deputy Director, DCFS

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